

Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup: 2014 Progress Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legislation passed in 2011 required the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to convene a Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup. The workgroup was tasked with coordinating and implementing seven goals, described in statute, to promote the award of college credit for prior learning (RCW 28B.77.230).¹ Awarding college credit for prior learning increases access and opportunity for Washingtonians, which strengthens the competitiveness of our workforce.

The workgroup does not set policy—it facilitates collaboration and communication across the system to implement these seven goals. WSAC submits an annual report to the Legislature on workgroup progress in carrying out the seven goals.

This report summarizes progress made in 2014 and also outlines a work plan of activities to be conducted in 2015.² The workgroup's focus this year was on awarding academic credit to returning veterans for military training. Some of the workgroup's significant accomplishments this year include the following:

- A. Gathering and reporting PLA participation data from community and technical colleges as well as public and private baccalaureate institutions.
 - There were significant increases over last year in both the number of students receiving PLA credit, and the number of credits awarded:
 - **12,987 students** received academic credit for prior learning that counted toward their major or earning their degree or certificate. This is an increase of 182% over last year.
 - **306,308 academic credits** were accepted by colleges and universities toward degrees, certificates, or credentials. This is an increase of 261% over last year and equivalent to approximately 6,800 annual full-time equivalent students.
- B. Providing examples of college and university websites that provide better information about PLA practices, and encouraging institutions to incorporate best practices.
- C. Initiating a PLA list serve.
- D. Hosting the fourth annual PLA conference in November 2014 with a focus on implementing SSB 5969—an act related to awarding academic credit for military training. The conference provided an opportunity for over 120 attendees from 50 different institutions to review PLA progress to date, improve practices to serve veterans, and share best practices.

The workgroup has identified a number of priority actions that will be the focus of its work in 2015, key among them being continued efforts to develop a process for serving returning veterans through PLA.

¹ The statute is available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.77.230>.

² Previous reports are available at <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/PreparingForCollege/PriorLearningCredit>

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BACKGROUND

On December 1, the Washington Student Achievement Council submitted the 2014 Strategic Action Plan to the Legislature and Governor.³ The report is comprised of seven funding and policy recommendations to meet the state's education attainment goals by 2023. These goals were as proposed in the 2013 Roadmap Report and adopted by the Legislature during the 2014 Legislative Session:

- All adults in Washington will have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- At least 70 percent of Washington adults will have a postsecondary credential.

The 2014 Strategic Action Plan recommendations focus on increasing educational attainment through expanded access to postsecondary opportunities and improving the affordability of postsecondary education. Increased educational attainment will, in turn, strengthen the competitiveness of our workforce. The funding and policy recommendations in the 2014 Strategic Action Plan were developed with input from stakeholders spanning our education sectors, including K-12, community and technical colleges, and public and private baccalaureate institutions.

Increasing Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) in Washington was one of the proposed actions in the 2013 Roadmap Report. It is one of the strategies to achieve Washington's educational attainment goals by 2023.⁴

INTRODUCTION

Granting college credit based on assessment of a student's prior learning in the workplace, military, or through other life experiences can have positive impacts on increasing educational attainment in Washington. Effective prior learning policies will:

- Ensure access by helping to make college more affordable, reducing the cost of a degree through the award of course credits for knowledge and skills developed through prior learning.
- Enhance learning by linking military and work-based learning to college courses, and encourage adults to earn postsecondary credentials.
- Prepare for the future by increasing awareness of postsecondary opportunities.

Legislation passed in 2011 required the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) to convene a Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup. The workgroup is tasked with coordinating and implementing seven goals described in statute to promote the award of college credit for prior learning (RCW 28B.77.230).⁵

³ The 2014 Strategic Action Plan is available at <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/strategic-action-plan>

⁴ The 2013 Roadmap is available at <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/the-roadmap>

⁵ The statute is available at <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28B.77.230>.

What is Prior Learning and Prior Learning Assessment?

Prior learning is defined as the knowledge and skills gained through work and life experience; through military training and experience; and through formal and informal education and training from in-state and out-of-state institutions including foreign institutions.

Prior learning assessment is the process used to evaluate previous life experience for academic credit. Prior learning assessment can be accomplished through standardized tests, course challenge examinations, portfolio assessment, and crosswalks⁶ between military and work-based learning and college courses.

Some PLA methods cost a student more than others, but any PLA credit-earning method will typically cost less than tuition to enroll in the equivalent course. In addition, when PLA credit is earned, it may allow the student to enroll in, or advance to, higher-level courses.

The workgroup does not set policy – it facilitates collaboration and communication across the system to implement the goals and develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning. WSAC submits an annual report to the Legislature on workgroup progress in carrying out the seven goals.

Prior Learning Assessment in Washington

Currently every college and university in Washington offers some form of prior learning assessment. In 2013 a workaround was developed for short-term data collection until a new coding method could be developed. SBCTC finalized the new coding method for non-traditional learning that went into effect fall quarter of 2014. However, the short-term workaround was used to collect this year's data.

The new coding method will be used to collect data for next year's report. The workgroup continues efforts in collaboration with other colleges and universities to develop and enhance methods for collecting PLA data. Current data is reported below.

The Prior Learning Assessment [website](#)⁷ provides additional information on the background of PLA in Washington, definitions, national research, and reasons why Washington is often regarded as a bellwether state in prior learning assessment.

Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup

The Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup consists of 70 representatives from a broad range of postsecondary education boards and councils, community and technical colleges, public and private baccalaureates, career colleges, legislative staff, public safety commissions, other state agencies (licensing and health), the workforce, apprenticeship program administrators and the military.⁸ The workgroup has two co-chairs, one from the community and technical college system and one from the public baccalaureates.

⁶ A crosswalk refers to a matrix used to compare industry- or military-based learning outcomes with outcomes for specific courses in a college. (Example: Basic Law Enforcement Academy training compared to Criminal Justice coursework).

⁷ <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/assessments-prior-learning>

⁸ See Appendix A for a list of Workgroup members

PROGRESS ON LEGISLATIVE GOALS: 2014

The enabling legislation for the workgroup (RCW 28B.77.230) lays out seven goals for prior learning assessment in Washington. To address these goals, the workgroup met four times in 2014 and convened the fourth annual statewide PLA Conference on November 21 at Clover Park Technical College. The workgroup continues to make progress on the goals identified in legislation.

Goal 1 and Goal 2

Increase the number of students who receive academic credit for prior learning and the number of students who receive credit for prior learning that counts towards their major or towards earning their degree, certificate, or credential—while ensuring that credit is awarded only for high quality, course-level competencies.

Increase the number and type of academic credits accepted for prior learning.

The State Board for Community and Technical College Admissions and Registrars Council worked over the past year to expand, clarify, and develop a complete policy recommendation for coding *non-traditional learning* that aligned with workgroup recommendations. This document presented the first systematic approach to “clarity and standardization while complying with accreditation, national practices, and [community and technical college] existing student management systems.”⁹ The recommendations were adopted by the Community and Technical College (CTC) system May 29, 2014 and are now being implemented on CTC campuses.

A work-around was developed in 2013 to collect aggregate data for the first time, and it was used again this year. Implementation of the new SBCTC methodology in fall 2014 should simplify reporting for 2015.

Campuses were asked to report on the number of students who received prior learning credit and the number of total credits awarded based on their institutional definition of PLA.

For academic year 2013-14 (summer 2013 through spring 2014):

- **12,987 students** received academic credit for prior learning that counted toward their major or earning their degree, certificate. This is an increase of 182% over last year.
- **306,308 academic credits** were accepted by colleges and universities toward degrees, certificates, or credentials. This is an increase of 261% over last year and equivalent to approximately 6,800 annual full time equivalent students.

Reporting campuses indicated they only award PLA for courses and credits that count toward credentials; and that all credit awarded is for high quality, course-level competencies. Several campuses (Western Washington University for example) report the vast majority of credits awarded are related to military experience.

⁹ The policy is available in Appendix B and at <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/it/CreditforNon-TraditionalLearning-Final05292014.pdf>

Goal 3

Develop transparent policies and practices in awarding academic credit for prior learning.

The workgroup focused on assisting campuses with implementation of SSB 5969,¹⁰ passed by the legislature in 2014. This legislation requires each institution to adopt “a policy to award academic credit for military training applicable to the student’s certificate or degree requirements.” Our 2014 PLA Conference focused on development of policy to meet this requirement, which is discussed further under Goal 4.

In 2013 sample policies and practices were updated and provided for reference in the *Handbook for Faculty and Staff* under Goal 5. Colleges and universities used the handbook to create their own policies in 2014, which they published on their websites and shared at our fourth annual PLA Conference.

PLA was added to an existing reciprocity agreement within the CTC system in 2013. The policy was discussed and clarified at several CTC system meetings in 2014. The reciprocity agreement allows the CTCs to give students credit for individual courses, even if the course does not have an exact equivalent, and even if it is awarded through prior learning credit. The courses must meet certain requirements at the sending college to be considered to have met that requirement at the receiving college for a similar transfer degree.

As described in Goal 2, the CTC Admissions and Registrars Council worked over the past year to expand, clarify, and develop a complete policy recommendation for coding non-traditional learning. The policy was adopted by the community and technical college system on May 29, 2014 and is now being implemented on CTC campuses.

Additional progress:

- A workgroup goal for 2014 was to create an online portfolio development course. Spokane Falls Community College, Spokane Community College, and Eastern Washington University have taken the lead and continue to work collaboratively to develop this course. College representatives attended the Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL) 2014 conference to learn about implementation strategies.
- A WSAC transfer liaison is available to assist students experiencing difficulties with credit transfer, including PLA credits. In 2014, no issues related to prior learning assessment were reported to the transfer liaison.

Goal 4

Improve prior learning assessment practices across the institutions of higher education.

Fourth Annual PLA Conference

The Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup held its fourth annual statewide PLA Conference Friday November 21 at Clover Park Technical College. The focus of this year’s conference was support for veterans and implementation of SSB 5969 – Providing and Awarding Credit for Military Training. The event was attended by over 120 faculty and staff

¹⁰ This bill is available at <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=5969&year=2013>

representing over 50 colleges and universities. It was held near Joint Basis Lewis McCord to enable more participation by veteran support groups and institutions close to the veteran population. All conference materials are available on the workgroup [wiki](#).¹¹

Dr. Joyce Loveday, Vice President of Instruction at Clover Park Technical College, welcomed all to campus. Mark San Souci from the Department of Defense summarized SSB 5969, which requires all colleges to develop policies for accepting military credit. Laura Bach represented the Washington Student Achievement Council State Approving Agency and presented the Veterans Administration perspective on using benefits and intersections with awarding PLA credit. A panel presentation with representatives from Pierce College, Olympic College, City University, and the University of Washington Tacoma provided examples of current practices serving veterans on their campuses.

Participants were encouraged to attend as teams made up of representatives from instruction, administration, and Veterans Services. Teams met and discussed campus presentations describing how PLA services are provided for veterans on their campuses. Examples of information from several colleges are provided in Appendix C.

Afternoon sessions included a presentation by Jaime Clarke and Sarah Steidl from Clackamas Community College in Oregon. The American Council of Education recommended Clackamas for their best practices in serving veterans and the presentation by their staff created an opportunity to compare our work with that from another state.

The final session of the day provided an opportunity for participants to attend one of two tracks to discuss either “The Joint Service Transcript, ACE Guides, and Crosswalk Development” or “Steps to Developing a Policy to Meet the Requirements of SSB 5969.” The conference concluded with summary presentations from each track’s discussions for the group, which have informed the workgroup’s 2015 agenda.

Presentations in Washington

PLA Workgroup progress was shared by workgroup members through several forums and presentations, including:

- A. Washington State Senate Higher Education Committee
- B. Washington State House of Representatives Higher Education Committee
- C. Washington State Military Transition Council
- D. Washington State Centers of Excellence Directors Meeting
- E. Updates to various groups throughout 2014: Intercollege Relations Commission, Joint Transfer Council, Washington Council for High School/College Relations, the Washington Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers
- F. Updates to various councils of the Washington Association of Community and Technical Colleges including the Instruction Commission, Articulation and Transfer Council, Workforce Education Council, and Advising and Counseling Council.

¹¹ <http://wa-priorlearningassessment.wikispaces.com/>

Workgroup and legislative updates were also provided upon request to the American Council of Education (ACE), the Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL), and the Minnesota State University System.

Goal 5:

Create tools to develop faculty and staff knowledge and expertise in awarding credit for prior learning and to share exemplary policies and practices among institutions of higher education.

Handbook

The workgroup reviewed the *Prior Learning Assessment Handbook* for faculty and staff.¹² This handbook is the result of cross-sector collaboration by PLA Workgroup members. Incorporating input from their colleagues and fellow educators. The handbook is available free on the [WA-Prior Learning Assessment](#)¹³ wiki.

Components of the handbook include:

- A. Definitions, purpose, and limitations of PLA.
- B. Methods of assessment.
- C. Sample policies processes and practices, including:
 - 1. Assessing and Awarding Credit for Prior Learning (General Policy).
 - 2. Sample Coding, Tracking and Transcription.
 - 3. Sample Fee Model.
 - 4. Legislation, standards and guidelines.
 - 5. Accreditation standards.
 - 6. Inter-college Reciprocity Policy for the Community and Technical Colleges.
 - 7. Examples of PLA policy and practices from Washington colleges and universities.
 - 8. Evaluation of prior military training, including examples of promotional materials for student veterans.

Wiki

Colleges in Washington made substantial progress improving PLA awareness. Washington PLA maintains an up-to-date [wiki](#) webpage that includes all activities and documents of the workgroup and is open for everyone to view.¹⁴

Listserv

Additionally, the PLA listserv developed in 2013 was implemented in 2014. The purpose of the listserv is to share news and provide a general forum for questions and answers across

¹² The *PLA Handbook* is available under a Creative Commons Attribution Noncommercial Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.

¹³ <http://wa-priorlearningassessment.wikispaces.com/>

¹⁴ <http://wa-priorlearningassessment.wikispaces.com/>

the system. PLA information is shared across other system listservs that cater to different groups – registrars, faculty, veterans and student services personnel. WSAC added PLA links to its student, family, and educator website—www.readysatgrad.org. The site offers education consumers access to PLA information.

Goal 6:

Develop articulation agreements when patterns of credit for prior learning are identified for particular programs and pathways.

The workgroup developed a model template for crosswalks between work-based prior learning and community and technical college courses. This template is included in the faculty handbook. The process is coordinated through the CTC Centers of Excellence.

Highline College made substantial progress in crosswalk development in 2014. They were supported by a grant from SBCTC-funded Hospital Employee Education and Training (HEET). This grant provided funding to “build innovative programs that enhance the accessibility of college education for hospital workers; lead to increased capacity of the college system in nursing and other high demand health care fields; and bring greater diversity to the health care workforce.”¹⁵ The grant allowed Highline College to build PLA and Competency-Based Education crosswalks for working Medical Assistants who must meet new Department of Health requirements to be credentialed in Washington State. Working Medical Assistants (MA) bring decades of experience and can easily provide evidence of prior learning to gain credit. In addition, the project is intended to start discussions on commonly accepted PLA or industry equivalents and crosswalks across Washington’s MA education programs.

Spokane Community College found that PLA crosswalks for many professional technical programs, (vs. portfolio or challenge exam assessment) are an attractive option. The following programs created crosswalks in 2014:

- A. Architecture
- B. Automotive
- C. Business
- D. Business Technology
- E. Computer Application Technology Training
- F. Computer-aided design and drafting CADD
- G. Computer Information Systems
- H. Fire Science; and
- I. Fire Officer.

¹⁵ See <http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/college/e-wkforcehospitalemployee.aspx> for more information.

Crosswalks have also been developed between common prior learning opportunities and college courses in the following programs:

Program	Program and College
Washington State Basic Law Enforcement	Criminal Justice program, Highline College
Military Police Training	Administration of Justice program, Highline College
CompTIA A+ Essentials Certificate	Information Technology program, Green River Community College
Various apprenticeships	Multi-Occupational Trades program, Wenatchee Valley College
NASBITE Global Business Professional Certificate	International Trade, Transportation, and Logistics program, Highline College
American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) Advanced Certificate Exam	Allied Health Imaging program, Bellevue College

Goal 7:

Develop outcome measures to track progress on the goals outlined in this section.

RCW 28B.77.230 directs the Academic Credit for Prior Learning Workgroup to develop outcome measures for tracking progress on the goals outlined in this section. Outcome metrics are continuously under review and results are reported above.

2015 WORKGROUP NEXT STEPS

The workgroup continues to develop sample processes and practices for achieving legislative goals that ensure more adult learners efficiently move through postsecondary education and enter the workforce well-prepared. Priorities for 2014 were identified by the workgroup during our December 11, 2014 meeting.

Assist colleges with implementation of SSB 5969 - Awarding Academic Credit for Military Training.

SSB 5969 requires each institution to adopt a policy to award academic credit for military training before December 31, 2015 and submit this policy to the PLA Workgroup. The policy applies to any individual who is enrolled in the institution, and has successfully completed a military training course or program as part of their service that is:

- Recommended for credit by a national higher education association that provides credit recommendation for military training courses and programs;
- Included in the individual's military transcript issued by any branch of the armed services; or
- Other documented training or experience.

Each institution must develop a procedure for receiving the necessary documentation to identify and verify the military training course or program that an individual is claiming for academic credit and provide a copy of this policy to individuals who listed prior or present military service on their application. Colleges must develop and maintain a list of military training courses and programs that have qualified for military credit.

Most colleges and universities have a policy for awarding credit to individuals who successfully completed a military training course or program, but these policies might not be detailed as required by this legislation.

Actions

1. Review policies as they arrive and develop a 'sample policy' to assist colleges in completing the requirements of this legislation.
2. Convene a statewide American Council of Education (ACE) Workshop for college faculty and staff to improve understanding and expand the use of ACE guide recommendations for both service members and other returning students.¹⁶ In-depth information on use of the new Joint Services Transcript (JST) recommendations for college credit will be provided.
3. ACE has facilitated workshops for faculty and staff in other states to address requirements similar to those of SSB 5969. Preliminary conversations indicate they have a process to assist faculty in looking directly at their courses and developing recommendations on military training equivalencies. Of particular interest are equivalencies to courses that meet diversity requirements or align with commonly numbered courses in the CTC system that can be used as distribution requirements in direct transfer degrees.
4. Collect examples of best practices from other states and colleges and make available to Washington campuses. Include information from the following institutions identified by ACE as having excellent programs for veterans:
 - a. **Fayetteville Technical Community College in North Carolina**
The college is thought to have developed the most extensive crosswalk between Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) and college credit.¹⁷
 - b. **Texas College Credit for Heroes**
This is a partnership between the Texas Workforce Commission and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ensure active duty, former,

¹⁶ Note: The American Council of Education is the "national higher education association that provides credit recommendation for military training courses and programs" referenced in SSB 5969.

¹⁷ http://www.faytechcc.edu/fort_bragg/credit-for-learning.aspx.

and retired military personnel receive the credit they earned for their service to our country.¹⁸

c. **Minnesota State Colleges and Universities – MNSCU**

The system is recommended by ACE as having clear and concise policies and equivalency guides for military training and college credits.¹⁹

d. **The Council for Adult Experiential Learning (CAEL)**

This organization is the national expert on PLA and has extensive resources regarding research in this area.²⁰

5. Investigate the feasibility of convening a statewide College Level Examination Program (CLEP) Workshop. This workshop for college faculty and staff will improve understanding and expand the use of CLEP examinations for service members and other returning students.

CLEP examinations are developed by the College Board (the organization that develops AP and SAT tests). These examinations are accepted for college credit by 2,900 colleges and universities across the U.S., including 35 in Washington. CLEP examinations are used extensively by service members prior to separation from the military to demonstrate college-level mastery. Examinations are federally funded through Defense Activity for Non Traditional Education Support (DANTES).

6. Develop relationships with state resources for developing a veterans' credit acceptance policy template including
- a. Military Transition Council established by Governor Inslee's Executive Order 13-01²¹
 - b. Workforce Education Council
 - c. Department of Health
 - d. Other campuses in the system currently reviewing their policies regarding veterans' education and standardized testing.

Work with Centers of Excellence to expand crosswalks between military and industry training and college programs through PLA pathways.

Crosswalks are an underutilized pathway between industry and education that can lead to increased educational attainment for Washingtonians in the workforce. Washington Integrated Sector Employment (WISE) awarded a \$10 million dollar grant to a consortium of community and technical colleges in Washington working through the grant lead, Centralia College/Center of Excellence for Clean Energy. Life-long learning, alignment with apprenticeship programs, veteran alignment programs, and credit for prior learning are a few components of the grant that align with goals of our workgroup.

¹⁸ <https://www.collegecreditforheroes.org/>

¹⁹ <http://www.mnscu.edu/military/index.html>

²⁰ <http://www.cael.org/home>

²¹ <http://www.governor.wa.gov/office/execorders/documents/13-01.pdf>

Actions

1. Meet with Centers of Excellence Directors and consortium member colleges to assist with the PLA component of the WISE grant.
2. Work directly with the Centers of Excellence to expand current crosswalks to other institutions, expand the number of crosswalks, and compile data on all crosswalks currently available. Post a compiled list of crosswalks in a central location.

Expand PLA communication.

The workgroup will continue to increase transparency and consistency of information available to students, stakeholders, faculty and staff across the system. General and target audiences will include: students, faculty, veterans, and the public. Increasing transparency about PLA practices on campuses is a priority. Colleges share students, so a common understanding of practices across institutions is important.

Actions

1. Improve clarity and statewide alignment of search terms for prospective students attempting to find and compare opportunities for non-traditional learning on campus websites.

On October 16, 2014, WSAC searched for PLA and veterans information on college websites using a variety of search terms²² and presented the information for workgroup review. This informal review found inconsistent terminology across campuses, suggesting a need for alignment of common terms.

2. Plan and implement the fifth annual Statewide PLA Conference. The focus on veterans will continue with an emphasis on finalizing policies to meet the requirements of SSB 5969. The work group set a tentative date of November 6, 2015 at Central Washington University.
3. Develop a best practice template for sharing information about PLA with students in the recruitment process, during new student orientations, and via online and in-person advising modules. Develop a checklist for the admission process so advisors know the up-front questions related to military and non-military PLA. This will help veterans use their benefits correctly, maximize the benefit of previous training, and facilitate completion of certificates and degrees.
4. Develop brochures to explain alternative credit options (including PLA and JST options) for the following audiences:
 - a. Veterans
 - b. Other returning students
 - c. Staff/faculty
5. Increase the amount and reach of consistent PLA information available online. Post and link to information across sector websites, including those of state agencies, campuses, apprenticeship programs and industry.

²² Results with links are available on the PLA wiki - <http://wa-priorlearningassessment.wikispaces.com/>

6. Update the handbook for faculty and staff that includes templates of policies and practices that institutions can use to develop their own policies.
7. Investigate options for developing an integrated PLA communications plan in Washington. The plan should include how information will be distributed across all levels within institutions (i.e. to vice presidents and other decision-makers on campuses), students, veterans, and other Washingtonians.
8. Continue to develop use of the PLA Listserv²³ and maintain a current wiki.

ONGOING ISSUES

PLA credit transfer between institutions

A continuing question in the workgroup is how PLA credits will transfer from one institution to another. The community and technical college system has included PLA credit in their reciprocity agreement between colleges, creating a clear process for the movement of PLA credits from one institution to another. Coding refinements developed by the community and technical college Admissions and Registration Council will help clarify this discussion.

Apprenticeships

The workgroup would like to include more information about apprenticeships and the number of individuals participating in and completing programs in Washington. The Workforce Education Council, Department of Labor and Industry, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges are all resources for integrating this information into our PLA report.

CONCLUSION

Progress made by the Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup over the past three years has brought a new awareness of the value students with prior learning bring to campuses. Granting college credit based on the assessment of a student's prior learning is a strategy to achieve one of our statewide educational attainment goals: at least 70 percent of Washington adults (ages 25-44) will have a postsecondary credential by 2023. Completing our next steps in 2015 will help colleges and universities, working with labor, industry and the military, increase educational attainment for all Washingtonians, especially our returning veterans and other adult learners.

Continued collaboration, integration, and focus will be needed to affect change and improve educational attainment we will need. We made substantial progress in 2014, and nationally we are considered to be leaders in using a workgroup model to develop PLA policy.²⁴ However, much work remains.

²³ To subscribe, go to <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=WA-PLA&A=1>

²⁴ As described by the Council of Adult Experiential Learning - <http://www.cael.org/pdfs/college-productivity-resource-guide2012>.

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APPENDIX A: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT WORKGROUP

Organization	Representative (F=faculty)	Position
Workgroup Co-chairs		
Bellevue College	Robin Jeffers	Coordinator, Effectiveness/Assessment
Bellevue College (October 2014)	Andy Brucia	Prior Learning Assessment Specialist, Health e-Workforce Consortium
Eastern Washington University	John Neace	Senior Director & ITDS Chair, Interdisciplinary Studies
Postsecondary Education Boards and Councils		
Washington Student Achievement Council	Jim West	Associate Director
Washington Student Achievement Council	Noreen Light	Associate Director
Washington Student Achievement Council	Laura Bach	Assistant Director, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training
Washington Student Achievement Council	Mike Ball	Director, State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training, Associate Director, Degree Authorization
Washington Student Achievement Council	Maddy Thompson	Director of Policy & Government Relations
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Joyce Hammer	Director of Transfer Education
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Bill Moore	Policy Associate, Project Director
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Alison Grazzini	Legislative Director
Council of Presidents	Paul Francis	Executive Director
Council of Presidents	Cody Eccles	Associate Director
Workforce Training Board	Nova Gattman	Legislative Liaison / Policy Analyst for Adult Workforce Issues
Independent Colleges of Washington	Violet Boyer	President & CEO

Appendix A

Organization	Representative (F=faculty)	Position
Independent Colleges of Washington	Chadd Bennett	Director of Research & Outreach
Baccalaureate Institutions		
Seattle University	Rick Fehrenbacher	Director, Continuing, Online & Professional Education
Washington State University	Jane Sherman	Vice Provost-Academic Policy & Evaluation
City U of Seattle	Jodey Lingg (F)	Program Manager, PLA Director
City U of Seattle	Kathy Yackey	Associate Registrar
University of Washington Seattle	Janice DeCosmo	Associate Dean, Undergrad Academic Affairs
The Evergreen State College	Leona Walker	Admissions
Western Washington Univ. (Joint Transfer Council Co-chair)	Steven Vanderstaay	Vice Provost Undergraduate Education
Central Washington University	Lori Braunstein	Director of Academic Planning
Central Washington University	Steve DuPont	Assistant Director, Government Relations
Central Washington University	Lindsey Brown	Registrar
Central Washington University	Rose Spodobalski-Brower	Associate Registrar
Central Washington University	Antonio Sanchez	Assistant Director, Government Relations
WGU Washington	Phil Schmidt	Associate Provost
Community and Technical Colleges		
Edmonds Community College	Pamela LeMay	Director, Special Academic Programs
Cascadia Community College	Erik Tingelstad	Dean for Student Learning
Clover Park Technical College	Cindy Mowry	Director of Enrollment Services
Whatcom Community College	Beth Tyne (F)	Faculty, Social Science. Learning Contracts
Highline College	Jennifer Johnson (F)	Prior Learning Assessment Coordinator
Community and Technical College-Articulation and	Joyce Carroll	Associate Dean of Instructional Services

Appendix A

Organization	Representative (F=faculty)	Position
Transfer Council (Bellevue College)		
Community and Technical College Workforce Education Council (Whatcom Community College)	Linda Maier	Dean, Workforce Education Instruction
Community and Technical College Workforce Education Council (Highline College)	Alice Madsen	Academic Affairs/Instruction
Spokane Falls Community College	Craig Rickett (F)	PLA Coordinator, Instructor Communication Studies
Community and Technical Colleges-Instruction Commission, Joint Transfer Council Co-Chair (Spokane Falls Community College)	Jim Minkler	Vice President of Learning
Everett Community College	Maureen O'Shaughnessy	PLA Program Manager
Lake Washington Institute of Technology (Workforce Education Council President 2013-14)	Sharon Buck	Dean, Industrial Technology
Center of Excellence for Careers in Education (Green River Community College)	Jamie Wells	Director
Center of Excellence for Homeland Security Emergency Management (Highline College)	Linda Crerar	Director
Faculty Association of Community and Technical Colleges (Clover Park Technical College)	Phil Venditti (F)	Speech Communications Faculty
Green River Community College	Denise Bennatts	Director of Enrollment Services
South Seattle College	Holly Moore	Executive Dean
Pierce College	Anne White	Registrar/Dean of Enrollment Services & Financial Aid
Pierce College	Tami Walsh	Evaluations
Pierce College	Kelly Benson	Dean, Military Program Student & Enrollment Services

Appendix A

Organization	Representative (F=faculty)	Position
Lower Columbia College	Tamra Bell	Director, Work-based Learning & External Outreach
Career Colleges		
Northwest Career College Federation	Gena Wikstrom	Executive Director
Everest College, Tacoma	Brian Lee	Director of Education
State House and Senate Staff, other state agencies		
Senate Higher Education	Kimberly Cushing	Committee Coordinator/Counsel
Senate Higher Education	Evan Klein	Counsel
Senate Majority Caucus	James Crandall	Staff Counsel
House Higher Education Committee	Megan Wargacki	Counsel
House Democratic Caucus	Chris Thompson	Senior Policy Analyst
House Republican Caucus	Brad Sherman	Policy Analyst
Department of Labor and Industry	Jody Robbins	Apprenticeship
Department of Public Health	Tommy Simpson	Health Services Consultant, Military Programs Manager, Health Systems Quality Assurance (HSQA)
Public Safety		
Criminal Justice Training Commission	Anthony Anderman	Eastern Regional Training Manager
Military/Department of Defense		
Regional Liaison NW - Department of Defense	Mark B. San Souci	Department of Defense Advisor
Workforce and Apprenticeship		
Spokane Area Workforce Development Council	Mark Mattke	Executive Director
SkillUp Washington	Susan Crane	Executive Director
Service Employees International Union Healthcare NW Training Partnership	Nancy Dapper	Project Manager – Workforce Intelligence & Integration
State Apprenticeship Coordinator Association and	Peter Lahmann	State Apprenticeship Coordinator

Appendix A

Organization	Representative (F=faculty)	Position
Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee		
Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers	Tony Lewis	Representative
American Federation of Teachers WA	Bernal Baca (F)	Government Relations
WA State Building and Construction Trades Council	Terry Tilton	Assistant Executive Secretary
Spokane Regional Labor Council	Beth Thew	Secretary-Treasurer

APPENDIX B: STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES POLICY: CREDIT FOR NON-TRADITIONAL LEARNING

Awarding Credit for Non-Traditional Learning

Background:

Classifying and awarding credit for areas that fall outside of traditional college courses has been a highly discussed topic throughout the Washington Community and Technical College system (CTC), on the state level and on a federal level. This document is a recommendation for a systematic approach that will create clarity and standardization while complying with accreditation, national practices, and our existing student management systems. These procedures are based upon information taken from the CTC Articulation and Transfer Council, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, existing legislation and the statewide Prior Learning Assessment Workgroup. This proposal seeks to build upon the work done by others to establish a set process for transcription.

Considerations:

Credit for non-traditional learning encompasses many different methods of learning and has significant impacts for students and institutions. Current practices vary greatly and the intent of this is to create a framework that provides standardization while allowing for flexibility. Common topics of discussion and our recommendations are as follows:

1. Alignment with PeopleSoft: The below transcript notation process aligns with established PeopleSoft functionality.
2. FTE generation: Eligibility for FTE generation should be pursuant to the SBCTC policy manual.
3. Fees: The fees associated with the evaluation and awarding credit for non-traditional learning are at the discretion of each college.
4. Compliance: The below procedures are in compliance with legislative mandates and accreditation standards. They also create a uniform system for reporting credit awarded to assist with meeting legislative requirements.
5. Grading: If graded, the transcribed passing grade will reflect the grading policies of the college. Unsuccessful attempts/evaluations will not result in transcription.
6. Transcript Notation: Classifications will be noted on transcripts for experiential learning only as described in this document.
7. Implementation timeline: The target implementation date is fall quarter 2014. Colleges may implement these procedures at an earlier time.
8. Financial Aid: Awarding of credits for non-traditional learning may impact financial aid eligibility.
9. Modifications: Modifications to this document will be under the direction of the Data Governance Committee.

Procedure Overview:

When possible, credit awarded for non-traditional learning will be directly transcribed on a student's transcript in the year quarter (YRQ) that it was awarded. Unique section codes will be used to assist in tracking and reporting credits awarded for non-traditional learning. In accordance with accreditation standards, a comment on the transcript will identify what courses were awarded for prior experiential learning. A comment on the transcript will also be added regarding credits awarded for transfer as defined below.

There will be situations where credit may be awarded even though the awarding institution does not have a course which is a direct correlation. In these instances, courses will be transcribed under the general category for which they fulfill (ex. Social Science or Psychology).

The CTC system will recognize three categories of Credit for Non-Traditional Learning, as follows:

1. **Transfer** – *Commonly accepted higher education equivalency exams that are documented via a transcript or other official record.* These categories will have individual unique section codes and may be considered as transfer credit as determined by the institution. These credits will appear on the student's transcript without a comment
 - a. A#P – Advanced Placement (AP)
 - b. I#B – International Baccalaureate (IB)
 - c. C#P – College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
 - d. DST – DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)
 - e. ACE – American Council on Education (ACE)
 - f. CLE – Cambridge "A" Level Exam
2. **Prior Experiential Learning** – *Knowledge and skills acquired through experience alone, evaluated (subjectively) by faculty via evaluation of a compilation of work.* This category will be coded with a section code of PEL and WILL be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning in accordance with accreditation standards.
 - a. PEL - Portfolio Review
3. **Extra-Institutional Learning** – *Knowledge and skills acquired outside the institution and objectively verified through third-party certifications, industry-recognized testing/training, crosswalks, or objective assessments (course challenge) administered by the college.* This category will be coded with its own section code and will NOT be noted on transcripts as awarded for prior learning. This category includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. CBE - Individual course challenges (e.g., credit by exam)
 - b. CRT - Individual industry certifications (e.g., NCLEX-RN)
 - c. OCW - Occupational Crosswalks (Police, Fire, AmeriCorps, Military, etc.)

Direct Transcription Procedure:

If equivalent course exists:

1. Instruction approves the awarding of credit.
2. Course information is directly transcribed in screen SAM6013.
 - a. Utilize unique section codes, as previously defined (i.e. "A#P", "PEL", "OCW").
 - b. Utilize a valid item number associated to the course in which credits are being granted. (This is for PeopleSoft conversion purposes.)
 - c. If graded, the transcribed PASSING grade will reflect the grading policies of the college. Unsuccessful attempts/evaluations will not result in transcription.
 - d. YRQ awarded is YRQ posted. A specific YRQ is used, *not* a universal YRQ (Z999).
3. Notation is made in the transcript comments screen (SM6012) for experiential learning only.
 - a. Use a specific YRQ, *not* a universal YRQ (Z999).
 - b. Specific course and source are noted with consistent language (abbreviations will be used as needed)

Examples

1. "ENGL&101 awarded from Exp Learning"
2. "CMST&210 awarded for Exp Learning"

If equivalent course does not exist:

1. Noted as a comment on the transcript.
2. Instruction approves the awarding of credit.
3. Notation is made in the transcript comments (SM6012)
 - a. Specific YRQ is used, *not* Z999.
 - b. No grade is awarded because it is not an available field.
 - c. Category, credits and source are noted with consistent language.

i. Examples

1. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from AP"
2. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from IB"
3. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from CLEP"
4. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from DSST"
5. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from ACE"
6. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from Cambridge"
7. "10 credits Soc Science awarded from Exp Learning"

Note: People Soft procedures pending.

APPENDIX C: EXAMPLES OF COLLEGE PROGRESS IN 2014

Colleges submitting data for this report were also asked to submit brief progress updates from 2014. Following, in their own words, are examples.

Highline College

Highline continues to provide pre-assessed PLA credit for certain Education and Administration of Justice certificates, as well as individual course PLA for various academic and professional technical courses. The big leap in PLA for Highline this year came from the SBCTC-funded HEET grant to provide PLA and competency-based education for working Medical Assistants who need to meet new requirements of the Department of Health to be credentialed in Washington State. Working Medical Assistants (MA) bring decades of experience and can easily provide evidence of prior learning to gain credit. In addition, the project is also hoping to begin discussion of commonly accepted PLA or industry equivalents and crosswalks across Washington's MA education programs.

Western Governors University Washington

In partnership with Western Governors University (WGU), WGU Washington is proud to offer VA benefits-approved education programs under the Montgomery GI Bill. Reserve and National Guard members may also qualify based on their own GI Bill guidelines. Eligibility and disbursement amounts will vary depending on a number of factors, including their term of military service, years of service, etc.

WGU has multiple programs set up to help veterans and active military members. All military member's application fee is waived upon the initial application process. Our Military Mobilization Policy allows active duty military students and spouses of active military members who must withdraw due to documented military mobilization to be readmitted to WGU in the same Satisfactory Academic Progress status as the term from which they were required to withdraw. Attempted units for the term of withdrawal will only be counted for those assessments successfully completed during the term.

In regards to receiving credit for military experience, neither Western Governors University nor WGU Washington provides credit for military experience. However, students waive certain requirements based on ACE-reviewed military experience. Students may also waive requirements based on DANTES and CLEP exams. A full transcript review is always required, as well as an assessment to measure their applied education and compatibility with WGU Washington's learning environment. If students have served in any branch of the military they should be able to obtain a military transcript—WGU's VA department can direct them to the online resources to request it.

Spokane Community College

Last year was both productive and challenging. We started the year sharing the advantages of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) or "*Credit for What You Know*," with our faculty. We emphasized that PLA is good for programs as it gives potential students an incentive to complete their degrees. We discovered this is a **relationship** business so we spent a significant amount of time meeting with our faculty.

Appendix C

We determined how PLA worked best for each program and received good feedback on how to streamline the administrative process. The most significant feedback from these conversations was the need to develop an inventory of what we already do; so, we created an inventory and separated it into three distinct categories: challenge exams, crosswalks and portfolio options. This inventory will help counselors and faculty guide students effectively in a timely manner

A few programs offer challenge exams and a couple programs grant credit through the portfolio. For many Professional Technical programs, PLA crosswalks (vs. portfolio or challenge exam assessment) are an attractive option. The following programs created crosswalks last year: Architecture, Automotive, Business, Business Technology, Computer Application Technology Training, CADD, Computer Information Systems, Fire Science, Fire Officer.

The administration developed the following rubric to pay faculty for the implementation of these crosswalks. Faculty members are paid per course into each industry certification: 1-8 courses \$400; 9-12 courses \$500; 13-17 courses \$600; 18 courses and above \$700. **Please note there is no cost to the student for credit granted through crosswalks.**

We also developed a PLA quick reference guide for challenge exams and crosswalk implementation to help faculty and staff navigate through the administrative process for the most common uses. The guide also includes a list of all PLA department contacts on campus. This effort was a result of feedback from students, faculty and staff.

Our capstone luncheon was a huge success. We held it at Orlando's (our Culinary Arts program) at the end of spring quarter for all of our PLA department contacts. Several faculty members presented their crosswalks to the group which helped others think about crosswalks for their own programs.

For more information:

1. **PLA webpage** - <http://icatalog.ccs.spokane.edu/PriorLearning.aspx>
2. **PLA Handbook, application and other forms:**
<http://www.ccs.spokane.edu/Forms/Prior-Learning-Assessment.aspx>;
3. **Forms:** A to Z in Employee Portal at <http://ccsnet.ccs.spokane.edu/> (pick link and scroll down to Prior Learning Assessment)

SCC developed a Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Quick Reference Guide which follows.

Appendix C

